GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:609
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2003
SMUGGLING OF SHAHTOOSH WOOL
VSM (RETD.) COL. CHOUDHARY

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the seizure of 215 kg. Shahtoosh wool as reported in the `Times of India` dated April 07, 2003;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether the Government have identified the persons involved in this racket;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the connivance of wildlife officials in this racket is also being investigated;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to curb this growing illegal trade in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a), (b), (c),(d), (e), (f) &(g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) & (g) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.609 REGARDING SMUGGLING OF SHAHTOOSH WOOL BY COL. (RETD.) SONA RAM CHOUDHARY DUE FOR REPLY ON 5.5.2003.

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A truck bearing number UP 14 R 2967 was caught by the enforcement officials of the Department of Forests & Wild Life, Government of NCT of Delhi on 5.4.2003 as per report received from the Delhi Administration.The truck that was coming from Haldwani was intercepted at Shahadra border. During the search operations, 11 bundles of shahtoosh wool having a total weight of 215 kgs were seized from the truck.

(c) & (d) The truck driver, Shri. Raje Singh and two other persons viz, Shri. Inder Singh Garbyal, a resident of village Garbyang, District Pithoragarh, Uttranchal and Shri. Baljeet Singh of village Rafla, Dharchula, Nepal, were arrested.

(e) &(f) As reported by the State Government of NCT of Delhi, no connivance of wild life officials has been reported.

(g) The measures taken by the Government to curb the illegal trade are as follows:

I. State level

(i) The State Government of Jammu & Kashmir hasamended its Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1978, including the Tibetan Antelope in Schedule I, thereby providing it highest degree of protection.

(ii) State level and District level coordination committees have been set up in several States to prevent poaching and illegal trade in wild life.

(iii) State Wild Life Authorities carry out regular checking of the stocks of dealers of animal products and birds.

II. National level

(i) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended and the punishments to the offenders have been enhanced including

forfeiture of their property.

(ii) Government of India has set up Regional and Sub-Regional offices for wild life preservation in major export and trade centres of the country to prevent smuggling of wild animals and their products.

(iii) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.

(iv) Financial and technical help is being extended to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz, Project Tiger, Project Elephant and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructureof the States for providing effective protection to wild animals. Assistance is also provided for giving rewards to the informers for eliciting information about poachers and smugglers.

(v) A special coordination and enforcement committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Secretary, Environment & Forests, Government of India, for control of poaching and illegal trade in wild life.

(vi) Export of wild animals and their derivatives is prohibited under EXIM Policy.

III. International level.

(i) Government of India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) for control of illegal trade in wild life items.

(ii) Bilateral agreements have been signed with Nepal and Republic of China for controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wild life.